

1 Planning Commission Recommended Comprehensive Plan Amendment
2 Amendment No. 2: Climate Change
3 Dated: October 2, 2019
4

5 Establish goals and policies to prevent and/or mitigate the impacts of climate change
6 Land Use Element
7 I. Introduction [...]

8 The community strongly values environmental protection. As a result, local development regulations
9 have sought to safeguard land, water and the natural environment, balanced with private property
10 rights. To reflect community priorities, development regulations also attempt to balance views and tree
11 conservation.

12 Town Center

13 For many years, Mercer Island citizens have been concerned about the future of the community's
14 downtown. Past business district revitalization initiatives (e.g. Project Renaissance in 1990) strove to
15 overcome the effects of "under-capitalization" in the Town Center. These efforts sought to support and
16 revitalize downtown commercial/retail businesses and devised a number of recommendations for future
17 Town Center redevelopment. Growing out of previous planning efforts, a renewed interest in Town
18 Center revitalization emerged in 1992 -- one looking to turn the 33-year-old downtown into the vital
19 economic and social center of the community.[...]

20 Sustainability

21 In 2006, a grassroots effort of Island citizens led the City to modify the vision statement in its
22 eComprehensive pPlan to include language embracing general sustainability, and in May 2007 the City
23 Council committed to a sustainability work program as well as a specific climate goal of reducing
24 greenhouse gasGHG emissions by 80% from 2007 levels by 2050, which was consistent with King County
25 and Washington State targets. Later in 2007, the City Council set an interim emissions reduction goal
26 (often called a "milepost") for City operations of 5% by 2012.

27 Mercer Island has a proud tradition of accomplishment toward sustainability. One of the earliest efforts
28 was the formation of the Committee to Save the Earth by high school students in the early 1970s.
29 Through the students' fundraising, the construction and opening of the Mercer Island Recycling Center
30 (Center) was realized in 1975. The self-supported Center was well-patronized by Islanders and, during its
31 many years of operation, it prevented millions of pounds of recyclable materials from ending up in the
32 landfill while contributing to the development of a sustainability ethic on Mercer Island.

33 Numerous community groups have contributed to sustainability accomplishments in the ensuing years,
34 and many are still active. Sustainable Mercer Island (SMI), has helped organize and publicize solarize
35 campaigns, among other contributions. SMI participants are also independently involved in youth
36 environmental education, public outreach, advocating for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and many

1 other activities. Some are doing research and many are volunteering with national and local
2 organizations working to solve the climate crisis. One volunteer leads the very successful Green Schools
3 program for the Mercer Island School District, supported by King County Department of Natural
4 Resources and Parks. SMI fosters waste reduction, recycling, and conservation by students and schools.
5 IslandVision, a non-profit organization, encourages and supports sustainable practices on Mercer Island.
6 It provided to the City, in 2018, a technical analysis of greenhouse gas (GHG) sources on Mercer Island
7 and recommended strategies to reduce GHG emissions.

8 In 2012, the City convened a Sustainability Policy Taskforce, a City/community partnership, to
9 recommend sustainability policies to the City. The City Council adopted its recommendations including
10 dedicated staffing, incorporation of recommendations into City planning documents, development of a
11 Sustainability Plan, and legislative actions to foster sustainability. The City's Sustainability Manager was
12 hired in 2013.

13 From 2010 to 2019, 4, with the entire community's sustainability in mind, the City has implemented a
14 wide range of outreach programs, efficiency campaigns, alternative energy initiatives, land-use
15 guidelines, and other natural resource management measures designed to minimize the overall impacts
16 generated by Island residents, for the benefit of future generations. Due to the 20-year horizon
17 envisioned by this Comprehensive plan, it is especially appropriate to include measures that address
18 the long-term actions needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, ideally in collaboration with other
19 local governments. Actions that the City will take in the management of its own facilities and operations
20 are addressed in the Capital Facilities Element of this plan. In 2018, the City continued to promote and
21 support sustainable development, through the development of green building goals and policies for all
22 residential development.

23 Beginning in 2018, the City assessed the City's strengths and weaknesses in supporting sustainability
24 using the STAR Communities framework. Information from this assessment, along with the measures
25 discussed above, and others under consideration, will be identified in more detail in a rolling 6-year
26 Sustainability Plan, to be adopted in 2019, which will guide the City's internal and external actions while
27 taking into account the interrelated issues of climate change, population change, land use, public
28 infrastructure, transportation choices, natural resources management, equitable services and
29 accessibility, arts and community, public health and safety, human services, and economic development.

30 Climate Change

31 Climate change has far-reaching and fundamental consequences for our economy, environment, public
32 health, and safety. Cities have a vital role in mitigating and adapting to climate change both individually
33 and by working collaboratively with other local governments. Current science indicates that to avoid the
34 worst impacts of global warming we need to reduce global GHG emissions sharply.

35 In 2008, the City created a Climate Action Task Force which was charged with developing a climate
36 action plan for the City and community. The resulting plan called for tracking emissions and the
37 formation of a City/community partnership which was called the Green Ribbon Commission. It was
38 tasked with identifying strategies to reduce GHG emissions. Notable outcomes were the successful

1 promotion of Puget Sound Energy’s Green Power Program, which generated funds to cover the cost of
2 the solar array the City installed at the Mercer Island Community & Events Center, and the 22 Ways
3 emissions reduction campaign.

4 Leap for Green Sustainability Fair spearheaded by IslandVision and co-developed with the City is a vital
5 instrument to educate and encourage engagement in sustainability. In addition to food and
6 entertainment, the fair offers activities for kids and adults, demonstrations and displays of
7 environmentally friendly ways of living, sustainability vendors, and more. The fair was not held in 2019
8 due to budget constraints.

9 In 2013, the City was recognized by the EPA as a Green Power Community of the Year for its Green
10 Power sign up campaign and for its commitment to local solar power generation. It was awarded Sol
11 Smart Gold Designation from the Department of Energy in January 2018 for removing obstacles to solar
12 development. The City offers same-day permitting for most solar installations.

13 The Capital Facilities Element includes a summary of the City’s actions to reduce its own carbon
14 footprint.

15 King County and cities formed the innovative King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) in 2014 to
16 coordinate and enhance local government climate efforts. The City was a founding member of K4C. K4C
17 has charted opportunities for joint action to reduce GHG emissions and accelerate progress toward a
18 clean and sustainable future. Mercer Island, through K4C, seeks opportunities to partner on outreach to
19 decision-makers and the public, adopt consistent standards and strategies, share solutions, and
20 cooperate on seeking funding resources. In 2016, Mercer Island, along with King County and other
21 partners in K4C was recognized with a national Climate Leadership Award from EPA.

22 The City has been very active in addressing climate change and has received national recognition for its
23 efforts. In 2013, the City was recognized by the EPA as a Green Power Community of the Year for its very
24 successful Green Power sign up campaign for residents and for its commitment to local solar power
25 generation. It was awarded Sol Smart Gold Designation from the Department of Energy in January 2018
26 for meeting stringent and objective criteria targeting removal of obstacles to solar development
27 including streamlined permitting. As of January 2018 there were 184 known solar installations in the
28 City, higher per capita than any other Eastside City. The City offers same day permitting for most solar
29 installations and most require only an electrical permit. The City has installed electric vehicle charging
30 stations, banned plastic bags, and successfully piloted bike share and ride hailing services among many
31 other actions.

32 Community GHG emissions have been inventoried and reported to K4C and the public when possible.
33 From 2016 through 2019, staff was not able to complete this task. The major sources of GHG on Mercer
34 Island have been found to be passenger car travel (estimated at 40% of total) and building energy
35 consumption (48% residential plus commercial).

36 With many good efforts completed and underway, it is necessary to take further action in order to meet
37 GHG reduction targets, both in our households and in our community.

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Goal 28: Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions

28.1 Collaborate with King County and cities as a member of the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) to increase the efficiency of efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

28.2 Dedicate staff to represent the City in K4C and to coordinate City programs and actions to mitigate climate change.

28.3 Update and adopt Mercer Island GHG reduction targets consistent with K4C, as amended.

28.4 Prioritize for implementation those K4C-recommended strategies that are relevant and feasible for Mercer Island.

28.5 Support annual reporting of Mercer Island GHG emissions to K4C and the public.

28.6 Engage individuals, community organizations, and businesses in a collaborative effort to mitigate climate change.

28.7 Provide public outreach and information to citizens about how they can mitigate and respond to climate changes.

28.8 GHG reduction strategies should be evaluated and used to set a priority for actions. Community acceptance and legal requirements should be considered.

28.9 Consider for early action the reduction of emissions from passenger vehicles.

a) Work with the community to develop zero- or low-greenhouse gas emitting transportation options for traveling intra-Island to or from community connection points. These options should be popular enough in use to substantially reduce aggregate GHG emissions from passenger vehicles. The program should be in place by 2023 when light rail arrives.

b) Promote electric vehicles.

28.10 Consider for early action the reduction of energy use in buildings.

a) Determine the best methods to promote a transition from natural gas to electricity for the energy needs of new buildings and retrofit of existing buildings as the regional source of power moves entirely away from fossil fuels.

b) Encourage and provide incentives for energy-saving retrofits of existing homes and buildings, in partnership with Puget Sound Energy and other organizations.

c) Determine the best methods to promote the use of construction materials that embody the least carbon feasible in manufacture and use. Consider building code changes, as necessary, to accommodate this transition.

d) Consider adopting a local building energy-benchmarking and disclosure ordinance.

e) Support green power community challenges and other programs to reduce building energy use.

- 1 28.11 Promote renewable power generation in the community.
- 2 a) Support campaigns to install solar energy and other power generation methods.
- 3 b) Continue to offer streamlined renewable energy installation permitting, when possible,
- 4 incentives, and other means to encourage power generation.
- 5 c) Consider building code changes, as necessary, to accommodate community renewable
- 6 power generation.
- 7 28.12 Focus future land development where utility and transportation investments have been made and
- 8 encourage land use patterns to be carbon efficient.
- 9 28.13 Strive to increase carbon sequestration and resilience to urban heat island effects by expanding
- 10 tree canopy and vegetation cover. Consider the use of cool roofs and pavements (reflective, for
- 11 example), reduced pavement widths, green roofs, and other potentially useful strategies.
- 12 28.14 Consider development of an Urban Forest Management Plan to assess canopy cover, set goals, and
- 13 establish implementation strategies.
- 14 28.15 Encourage residents using fossil fuels, such as home heating oil, to convert to clean and renewable
- 15 energy sources.

16 **Goal 29: Develop a Climate Action Plan.**

17 Consider development of a Climate Action Plan including the following components:

- 18 • A summary of City actions to date;
 - 19 • A broad examination of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
 - 20 • Re-evaluation of the recommendations from the 2012 Sustainability Policy Recommendations
 - 21 Report;
 - 22 • Provisions to monitor progress of implementation; and
 - 23 • Provisions to update the plan in response to changing conditions and new opportunities.
- 24

25 **Goal 30: Adapt to climate change.**

26 Place the highest priority on mitigating climate change but respond to indications of impacts in the

27 community that may require an adaptive response.

28 [...]

29 Utility Element

30 Solid Waste Policies

- 31 5.1 All new construction, with the exception of single-family homes, shall be required to provide
- 32 adequate space for on-site storage and collection of recyclables pursuant to Ordinance A-99.

- 1 5.2 The City shall actively promote and support recycling, composting and waste reduction techniques
2 among the single-family, multi-family and commercial sectors with the aim of meeting or exceeding
3 King County diversion goals.
- 4 5.3 The City shall, whenever practical, provide convenient opportunities for residents to recycle
5 appliances, tires, bulky yard debris and other hard-to-recycle materials.
- 6 5.4 The City shall actively promote and support the proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste
7 produced by households and businesses. The use of alternate products that are less hazardous or
8 produce less waste shall be encouraged.
- 9 5.5 City departments and facilities shall actively participate in waste reduction and recycling programs.
- 10 5.6 All hazardous waste generated by City departments and facilities shall be handled and disposed of
11 in accordance with applicable county, state, regional and federal regulations.
- 12 5.7 The City shall actively enforce the Solid Waste Code and other ordinances and regulations that
13 prohibit the illegal dumping of yard debris and other types of waste.
- 14 5.8 The City shall play an active role in regional solid waste planning, with the goal of promoting
15 uniform regional approaches to solid waste management.
- 16 5.9 The City shall actively promote and support the recycling, re-use or composting of construction,
17 demolition and land-clearing debris wherever feasible.

18 [...]

19 Capital Facilities Element

20 I. Introduction [...]

21 In 2012, activities were expanded further with the hiring of the City’s first dedicated Sustainability
22 Manager, who designs, implements, and then oversees much of the internal sustainability project work.
23 In addition, the Mayor and City Council have increasingly addressed or supported specific regional and
24 state-level climate commitments or legislation.

25 In 2017, the City confirmed a major commitment to clean power by announcing its contract with Puget
26 Sound Energy for 2019 through 2039, in which it will buy 20 years of clean wind power to replace its
27 current mix of electricity, covering its annual municipal usage of three million kilowatt hours.

28 Due to the 20-year horizon envisioned by this Comprehensive pPlan, it is especially appropriate to
29 include internal measures that address the long-term actions needed to reduce greenhouse gas
30 emissions, ideally in collaboration with other local governments. Actions that the City will implement
31 with the entire community’s sustainability in mind are addressed in the Land Use Element of this plan.
32 Various City Departments, such as Parks and Recreation and Maintenance, prepare functional plans that
33 directly implement some sustainability programs.

34 ~~These Capital Facilities measures, and others under consideration, are identified in more detail in a~~
35 ~~rolling 6-year Sustainability Plan, to be adopted in 2016, which will guide the City’s internal and external~~

1 actions while taking into account the interrelated issues of climate change, population change, land use,
2 public infrastructure, natural resources management, quality of life, public health, and economic
3 development.

4 V. Capital Facilities Goals and Policies [...]

5 1.20 City operations should be optimized to minimize carbon footprint impacts, especially with respect
6 to energy consumption and waste reduction. New Capital Facilities should incorporate and
7 encourage the sustainable stewardship of the natural environment, ~~and~~ consider the benefit of
8 creating cutting-edge, demonstration projects, and favor options that have the lowest feasible
9 carbon footprint and greatest carbon sequestration potential. The adoption of GHG emission
10 reduction targets recommended by K4C should be considered.

11 1.21 City procurement should include consideration of total lifecycle costs, recycled content, and other
12 common measures of product sustainability.

13 1.22 Current City facilities are operated in an energy-efficient manner, and opportunities for
14 improvement are implemented when feasible. New City facilities should explore meeting public
15 and private-sector sustainable building certification standards, such as the 'BuiltGreen' system and
16 the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system.

17 1.23 Parks & Open Space Capital Facilities – Identify measures to reduce carbon footprint and GHG
18 emissions when planning projects, choosing options with the lowest feasible carbon footprint and
19 greatest carbon sequestration potential. Implement sustainability measures identified within the
20 City's Parks and Recreation Management Plan, including special attention to direct sustainability
21 measures, such as tree retention, preference for native vegetation and habitat creation, minimized
22 use of chemicals, and reductions in energy and fuel use.